

**SOUTH DAKOTA DEPARTMENT OF EDUCATION  
SPECIAL EDUCATION PROGRAMS**

**Shannon County School District**

**Continuous Improvement Monitoring Process Report 2005-2006**

**Team Members:** Linda Shirley, Team Leader, Barb Boltjes, Donna Huber, Mary Borgman, Education Specialists. Melissa Flor, Peggy Mattke, Becky Cain, Special Education Programs.

**Dates of On Site Visit:** October 19, 2005

**Date of Report:** November 19, 2005

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This report contains the results of the steering committee's self-assessment and the validation of the self-assessment by the Special Education Programs. The report addresses six principles – General Supervision, Free Appropriate Public Education, Appropriate Evaluation, Procedural Safeguards, Individualized Education Program and Least Restrictive Environment. Each principle is rated based on the following scale:

<b>Promising Practice</b>	The district/agency exceeds this requirement through the implementation of innovative, high-quality programming and instructional practices.
<b>Meets Requirements</b>	The district/agency consistently meets this requirement.
<b>Needs Improvement</b>	The district/agency has met this requirement but has identified areas of weakness that left unaddressed may result in non-compliance.
<b>Out of Compliance</b>	The district/agency consistently does not meet this requirement.
<b>Not applicable</b>	In a small number of cases, the standard may not be applicable for your district/agency. If an item is not applicable, the steering committee should briefly explain why the item is NA. Example – no private schools within the district boundaries.

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<b>Principle 1 – General Supervision</b>
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General supervision means the school district's administrative responsibilities to ensure federal and state regulations are implemented and a free appropriate public education is provided for each eligible child with a disability. The specific areas addressed in principle one are child find, referral procedures, children voluntarily enrolled by parents in private schools, students placed by the school district, improving results through performance goals and indicators (assessment, drop out, graduation), professional development, suspension and expulsion rates.

**Steering Committee Self-Assessment Summary**  
**Data Sources used:**

B – District/Agency Instructional Staff Information  
C – Suspension and Expulsion Information  
D – Statewide Assessment Information  
E – Enrollment Information  
F – Placement Alternatives  
G – Disabling Conditions  
H – Exiting Information  
Parent Survey, referrals, publications of child find Notices  
Comprehensive plan  
Yearly child find results

**Promising Practice:**

The Shannon County K-8 staff participated in Data Retreats which occurred in the fall of 2003, 2004, and 2005. Working collaboratively and reflectively the Shannon staff examined test data and classroom grades which enabled them to paint a picture of student achievement. They also correlated student achievement with school programs. Considerable time was devoted to analyzing the data and determining areas of strength and weakness. Students performing at the basic and below basic levels have Individual Learning Action Plans developed on the Shannon County Website. Staff also studied and compiled parent and student surveys which allowed them to study the perceptions in their school community.

The district uses accelerated reader and success maker with all students at the elementary level to increase skills.

**Meets requirements**

The school district has in place appropriate procedures for child find for student's birth-21. Child find procedures are found in the comprehensive plan on 12. This includes procedures, public awareness campaign, documentation, child count and screening. Teachers are given IEPs for students during the school year.

The Shannon County School District has in place a Director of Special Education who works in conjunction with the Records Clerk, District Social Worker, and case managers to coordinate, implement, and document the child find system.

The district utilizes a TAT (teacher assistance team) to document strategies they have tried in the classroom, and special education staff give suggestions during the pre-referral process. Parents are invited to join the pre-referral process and have input into strategies. 39 of 52 district staff surveyed indicated the school has sufficient pre-referral interventions and support services available to maintain at risk students in the general education program. Students identified as Basic or Below Basic on the Shannon County Assessment website have an Individualized action plan developed.

School District Staff coordinate with Private school officials to ensure that special education and related services are provided in accordance with requirements of IDEA.

Shannon County School District utilizes the Shannon County Website to analyze school district level data to improve the children with disabilities proficiency levels. The school district is making data based decisions based on needs from the state assessment and progress with goals and objectives from the IEPs according to file reviews, as per state policies and regulations and the comprehensive plan. Based upon SAT 9 participation data table D, the district submits assessment participation data to the state annually.

Coordination of annual count is conducted as outlined in comprehensive plan in section VIII. Shannon county school district SIMS coordinator, special education director and administrative staff, and private school administration coordinate this activity.

School District Staff coordinate with Private school officials to ensure that special education and related services are provided in accordance with requirements of IDEA.

## **Validation Results**

### **Promising practice:**

#### **Preschool**

Preschool is offered each of the elementary schools in Shannon County. This service is offered free of charge including transportation to and from school. The classes last all day and are five days a week. The children are brought to the school and given breakfast first and then begin attending class.

#### **Social Worker**

Shannon County employs a social worker to assist with family involvement. The social worker meets with all parents in their home to go over the permission for re-evaluations and obtains signatures as needed. He also helps to set up meetings and arrange transportation for the parents if necessary.

#### **After School Program**

All of the attendance centers have an after school program to assist students with completion of homework and help keep them caught up. Rocky Ford's program is twice a week and includes transportation home at five o'clock. Wolf Creek's program is on an as needed basis.

#### **Lakota Studies**

Each attendance center hires a Lakota studies teacher. All of the classes are given instruction in Lakota traditions two times a week.

#### **Data Retreats**

The monitoring team verified this promising practice.

#### **Work Sampling and Lesson Plans**

Based on interview and review of the third grade teacher's curriculum work sampling folders, the monitoring team found a promising practice with the districts utilization of a work sampling curriculum. Each teacher has a map for each core area which has been placed in a folder and laminated. This map includes the indicator within the content standards, the content to be taught and when it will be taught. Teachers utilize these maps to write their weekly lesson plans. Each lesson plan delineates the standard being taught and the activities which the students will complete. On the second page, the teacher describes the modifications which will be made for students in the talented and gifted program and also any students on IEP's.

#### **Teacher Assistance Teams**

Shannon County's teacher assistance teams are utilized for several behaviors. Teachers use them not only for students they are planning to refer for evaluation, but also to address behavior difficulties and learning difficulties which will not lead to evaluation.

#### **Staff Development**

The staff at Shannon County has many opportunities for staff development.

1. Teachers taking South Dakota Reads
2. Autism training for 8 teams from the Center for Disabilities
3. PECS training

4. State training on brain research
5. Adopting Investigations math K-5 with Rapid City School and TIE
6. Early Reading first grant
7. Lakota Nations conference includes 6 + 1 Traits
8. Indian Education conference on NCLB guidelines
9. Onward to Excellence
10. Boys Town Training

### **Meets Requirements**

The monitoring team agrees with the steering committee data for Principle One, General Supervision as meeting the requirements.

### **Out of Compliance**

#### **ARSD 24:05:17:03 Annual report of children served**

All eligible children with disabilities are entitled to a free appropriate public education in the least restrictive environment. The specific areas addressed in principle two are the provision of FAPE to children residing in group homes, foster homes, or institutions, making FAPE available when a child reaches his/her 3<sup>rd</sup> birthday and providing FAPE to eligible children with disabilities who have been suspended or expelled from school for more than 10 cumulative days.

The monitoring team was unable to validate an IEP was in effect on December 1<sup>st</sup>, 2004 for one student who was listed on the district's 2004 child count.

### **Issues Requiring Immediate Attention**

#### **24:05:25:04 Evaluation procedures**

School districts shall ensure, at a minimum, that evaluation procedures include the following:

- (4) No single procedure is used as the sole criterion for determining eligibility or an appropriate educational program for a child;
- (7) The child is assessed in all areas related to the suspected disability, including, as applicable, health, vision, hearing, social and emotional status, general intelligence, academic performance, communicative status, and motor abilities;
- (8) The evaluation is sufficiently comprehensive to identify all of the child's special education and related services needs, whether or not commonly linked to the disability category in which the child has been classified;

Through interview and a review of student records, the review team identified the following issues:

1. The data reported from a May 2005 reevaluation for a student identified as mental retardation did not yield eligibility scores to support mental retardation. On the WISC III the Full scale was 73, performance 89, and verbal 63. The Adaptive Behavior scores composite were within the normal range.
2. The data reported from an April 2004 reevaluation for a student identified on child count as mental retardation did not yield eligibility scores to support mental retardation. On the WISC 111 the PIQ was 95. There was no adaptive behavior scores reported.
3. The data reported from an April 2003 reevaluation for a student identified on the child count as orthopedic impairment did not yield eligibility scores to support orthopedic impairment. The

Occupational Therapist stated “Scores do not indicate a need for OT services; however occupational therapy services are recommended to work on self-help/dressing skills.”

4. The data reported from a June 2005 evaluation identified a child as speech/language; however the scores did not show eligibility. There were no speech/language evaluations given. The score from a subtest on the Battelle was the sole criteria for determining eligibility.

## **Principle 2 – Free Appropriate Public Education**

All eligible children with disabilities are entitled to a free appropriate public education in the least restrictive environment. The specific areas addressed in principle two are the provision of FAPE to children residing in group homes, foster homes, or institutions, making FAPE available when a child reaches his/her 3<sup>rd</sup> birthday and providing FAPE to eligible children with disabilities who have been suspended or expelled from school for more than 10 cumulative days.

### **Steering Committee Self-Assessment Summary**

#### **Data Sources Used:**

State Tables C,E,F,K, L, M, N

Age at referral

Number of students screened

Personnel development education

Preschool age

School age

Personnel training

Budget information

Comprehensive plan

Surveys

#### **Meets requirements**

The steering committee reported the provision of a free appropriate public education for all children. The school district follows the adopted state approved comprehensive plan that defines FAPE, and complies with state and federal procedures and regulations for FAPE. FAPE is also identified in the Parental Rights brochure. The brochure is distributed to parents whose children are being referred, or on existing IEPs, and/or denial of services.

The school district provides FAPE for children birth through 21 as determined by their IFSP and IEP needs. The district follows state and federal regulations accordingly to ensure FAPE for all students. County school district SIMS coordinator, special education director and administrative staff, and private school administration coordinate this activity.

### **Validation Results**

#### **Meets requirements**

The monitoring team agrees with the steering committee data for Principle Two, Free Appropriate Public Education as meeting the requirements.

## **Principle 3 – Appropriate Evaluation**

A comprehensive evaluation is conducted by a team of knowledgeable staff, which also includes parental input. A valid and reliable evaluation will result in effective individualized education programs for eligible students. The specific areas addressed in principle three are written notice and consent for evaluation, evaluation procedures and instruments, eligibility determination, reevaluation and continuing eligibility.

### **Steering Committee Self-Assessment Summary**

#### **Data Sources Used:**

State tables G,H,I,J

Teacher file reviews

Surveys

Comprehensive plan

Parent Teacher report forms

Initial referral

#### **Meets Requirements:**

Written notice and consent for evaluation is adhered to at Shannon County.

The district evaluation team is comprised of 2 or more of the following: special educator, school psychologists, speech clinician, preschool teacher, general educator and administrator.

Areas to be evaluated are determined by a “team” of people including the referring person, special education teacher, parent, school psychologist and administrator during the pre-referral, TAT, and referral process.

In 36 of 38 files reviewed there was evidence of parent participation into the evaluation process.

An MDT report was available in 100% of the files with students with learning disabilities.

100% of parents surveyed indicated they receive copies of test results.

Parents indicated that test results have been explained so they understood.

Copies of the evaluation reports are given to the parent at the IEP meeting.

Reevaluations are completed on all students in the Shannon County District. Evaluations determine eligibility and the needed services to meet the student’s needs.

#### **Needs Improvement**

Functional evaluation data was available in all areas of suspected disability in 17 of 36 student files reviewed. District needs improvement in this area. Shannon County is in the process of developing a functional assessment system which will include utilization of the Brigance.

## **Validation Results**

### **Meets Requirements**

The monitoring agrees with the following as meets requirements as identified by the steering committee. The district evaluation team is comprised of 2 or more of the following: special educator, school psychologists, speech clinician, preschool teacher, general educator and administrator.

In 36 of 38 files reviewed there was evidence of parent participation into the evaluation process.

An MDT report was available in 100% of the files with students with learning disabilities.

100% of parents surveyed indicated they receive copies of test results.

Parents indicated that test results have been explained so they understood.

Copies of the evaluation reports are given to the parent at the IEP meeting.

Reevaluations are completed on all students in the Shannon County District.

### **Needs Improvement**

The Shannon County School District does not have a team of individuals determining what evaluations will be given a student in need of a reevaluation. Through interviews the monitoring team found that a student being reevaluated is given the same battery of evaluations that were previously given. Only in an initial evaluation is a team used to determine the necessary evaluations needed.

Through file reviews and interviews it was determined by the monitoring team the preschool evaluations do not have a written report given to the parents. They copy off the front and back pages of the Battelle Development Inventory and give it to the parents.

### **Out of Compliance**

#### 24:05:25:04. Evaluation procedures

School districts shall ensure, at a minimum, a child is assessed in all areas related to the suspected disability and those evaluation procedures include a variety of assessment tools and strategies to gather relevant functional and developmental information about the child. This is to include information provided by parents that may assist in determining whether the child is a child with a disability and the content of the child's IEP.

Twenty six out of 41 files reviewed showed no functional evaluations were completed.

## **Principle 4 – Procedural Safeguards**

Parents of children with disabilities have certain rights available. The school makes parents aware of these rights and makes sure they are understood. The specific areas addressed in principle four are adult

student/transfer of rights, content of rights, consent, written notice, confidentiality and access to records, independent educational evaluation (IEE), complaint procedures, and due process hearings.

## **Steering Committee Self-Assessment Summary**

### **Data Sources Used:**

State Table L and M  
Teacher file reviews  
Surveys  
Comprehensive plan  
Parental Right document  
Consent and prior notice forms  
Public awareness information  
FERPA disclosure

### **Meets requirements**

The school district policies and regulation requirements, parental surveys and file reviews indicate the district ensures notification to parents of their rights.

Consent is obtained for all placements by the school district.

Due process hearing procedures are specified in the district comprehensive plan.

The school district has policies and procedures to address complaint issues.

The school district's policies and procedures provides all parents the opportunity to inspect and review all educational records concerning their child in the provision of a free and appropriate public education.

## **Validation Results**

### **Meets requirements**

Through the review of data tables and staff interviews, the monitoring team agrees with the following areas as meets requirements for procedural safeguards as concluded by the steering committee.

The school district policies and regulation requirements, parental surveys and file reviews indicate the district ensures notification to parents of their rights.

Due process hearing procedures are specified in the district comprehensive plan.

The school district has policies and procedures to address complaint issues.

The school district's policies and procedures provides all parents the opportunity to inspect and review all educational records concerning their child in the provision of a free and appropriate public education.

### **Out of Compliance**

**24:05:30:04. Prior notice and parent consent.** Written notice which meets the requirements of § 24:05:30:05 must be given to the parents five days before the district proposes or refuses to initiate or change the identification, evaluation, or educational placement of the child or the provision of a free appropriate public education to the child. The five-day notice requirement may be waived by the parents. If the notice described in this section relates to an action proposed by the district that also requires parental consent, the district may give notice at the same time it requests parent consent.



Informed parental consent must be obtained before conducting a first-time evaluation, reevaluation, and before initial placement of a child in a program providing special education or special education and related services. Parental consent is not required before:

- (1) Reviewing existing data as part of an evaluation or reevaluation; or
- (2) Administering a test or other evaluation that is administered to all children unless, before administration of that test or evaluation, consent is required of parents of all children.

Through file reviews and interviews the monitoring team found 4 files that had no prior notice for evaluation.

## **Principle 5 – Individualized Education Program**

The Individualized Education Program (IEP) is a written document for a child with a disability that is developed, reviewed and revised by the IEP team, which includes the parent. The specific areas addressed in principle five are IEP team, IEP content, transition components for secondary IEPs, annual reviews, transition from early intervention program, and IEP related issues.

### **Steering Committee Self-Assessment Summary**

#### **Data Sources Used:**

1. Parent Surveys
2. Student Surveys
3. Comprehensive Plan
4. Teacher file reviews
5. Personnel Training
6. Budget information

#### **Meets requirements**

Written notice has all required content.

Parents were invited to meetings in all files reviewed.

Required membership was at all IEP meetings.

Services are started immediately after the IEP team has met

Goals are linked to the present levels of performance.

IEPs reviewed addressed the student's participation in state and/or district wide assessments.

IEPs reviewed, modifications provided for state/district assessments were needed by the student on a daily basis.

100% of IEPs reviewed documented the beginning date and duration on services.

In 34 of 36 files reviewed the students IEPs were reviewed annually, on or before the date of the previous IEP.

The district comprehensive plan has procedures in place to address the transition of children to the Part B program.

100% of IEPs reviewed documented the beginning date of service to be as soon as possible after the IEP was developed.

#### **Out of Compliance:**

The present levels of performance in 23 of 36 files reviewed contained specific skills in the student's strengths, weakness and the student's involvement in the general curriculum. Missing components include: effect of disability, parent input, and more information to link to goals on student's skills.

## **Validation Results**

### **Meets requirements**

The monitoring team agrees with the following areas identified as meeting the requirements for the development of an IEP as concluded by the steering committee.

Written notice has all required content.

Parents were invited to meetings in all files reviewed.

Required membership was at all IEP meetings.

Services are started immediately after the IEP team has met

IEPs reviewed addressed the student's participation in state and/or district wide assessments.

IEPs reviewed, modifications provided for state/district assessments were needed by the student on a daily basis.

100% of IEPs reviewed documented the beginning date and duration on services.

In 34 of 36 files reviewed the students IEPs were reviewed annually, on or before the date of the previous IEP.

The district comprehensive plan has procedures in place to address the transition of children to the Part B program.

100% of IEPs reviewed documented the beginning date of service to be as soon as possible after the IEP was developed.

### **Out of compliance**

**24:05:27:01.03. Content of individualized education program.** Each student's individualized education program shall include:

- (1) A statement of the student's present levels of educational performance, including:
  - (a) How the student's disability affects the student's involvement and progress in the general curriculum (i.e., the same curriculum as for nondisabled students); or
  - (b) For preschool student, as appropriate, how the disability affects the student's participation in appropriate activities;
- (2) A statement of measurable annual goals, including benchmarks or short-term objectives, related to:
  - (b) To be involved and progress in the general curriculum in accordance with this section and to participate in extracurricular and other nonacademic activities; and
  - (c) To be educated and participate with other students with disabilities and nondisabled students in the activities described in this section;
- (4) An explanation of the extent, if any, to which the student will not participate with nondisabled students in the regular class and in activities described in this section;

Fifteen out of forty one files reviewed did not have measurable annual goals. For example; Will apply writing skills." "Improve expressive and receptive language." "Improve decision making skills." "Will solve mathematical problems of increasing levels of difficulty."

Twenty four of forty one files reviewed did not document the present levels of performance. The present levels of performance were not skill specific, and did not address how the student's disability affects involvement and progress in the general curriculum. For example; Weakness listed articulation, "\_\_\_struggles in the areas of reading, writing, and mathematics." Under academics another file only

listed \_\_\_ works very slowly taking her time to get it right. Some statements for the Affect of the disability are as follows:

“The team feels that \_\_\_ will make adequate gains with inclusion services.” “\_\_\_ is able to make adequate gains towards general classroom objectives with modifications and accommodations. There will be special education support staff in the general classroom during literacy and math activities.” “\_\_\_ does better in a one-on-one environment. The team accepted self-contained classroom as \_\_\_ placement.”

#### **ARSD 24:05:28:02 Continuum of alternative placements**

The IEP team must address the justification for placement through a statement in the IEP. This statement must include an explanation of the extent, if any, to which the child will not participate with non-disabled children in the general classroom and in extracurricular and non-academic activities.

Twelve out of forty one justification statements did not address the required content. The accept reject format was not used in all files and the question why the student can not participate in the regular classroom was not addressed. For example, “The team accepted that \_\_\_ will participate with his non-disabled peers in the general classes in extracurricular and non-academic activities. “\_\_\_ will participate with his peers in all areas of general education. He will do all academics and non-academics with his peers in the regular class.” “The team accepts general classroom with modifications. \_\_\_ will make adequate gains from full inclusion SPED services.”

### **Principle 6 – Least Restrictive Environment**

#### **Steering Committee Self-Assessment Summary**

##### **Data Sources Used:**

State tables E,G,I,J,F and N  
File Reviews  
Surveys

##### **Meets requirements**

In all files reviewed, the specific special education program (goals and objectives) were developed prior to concluding placement on the continuum of least restrictive environments.  
The districts comprehensive plan provides procedures for determining placement options using the continuum of alternative placements.

#### **Validation Results**

##### **Meets Requirements**

The monitoring team agrees with all areas identified as meeting requirements under least restrictive environment as identified by the steering committee.